A FRAMEWORK FOR

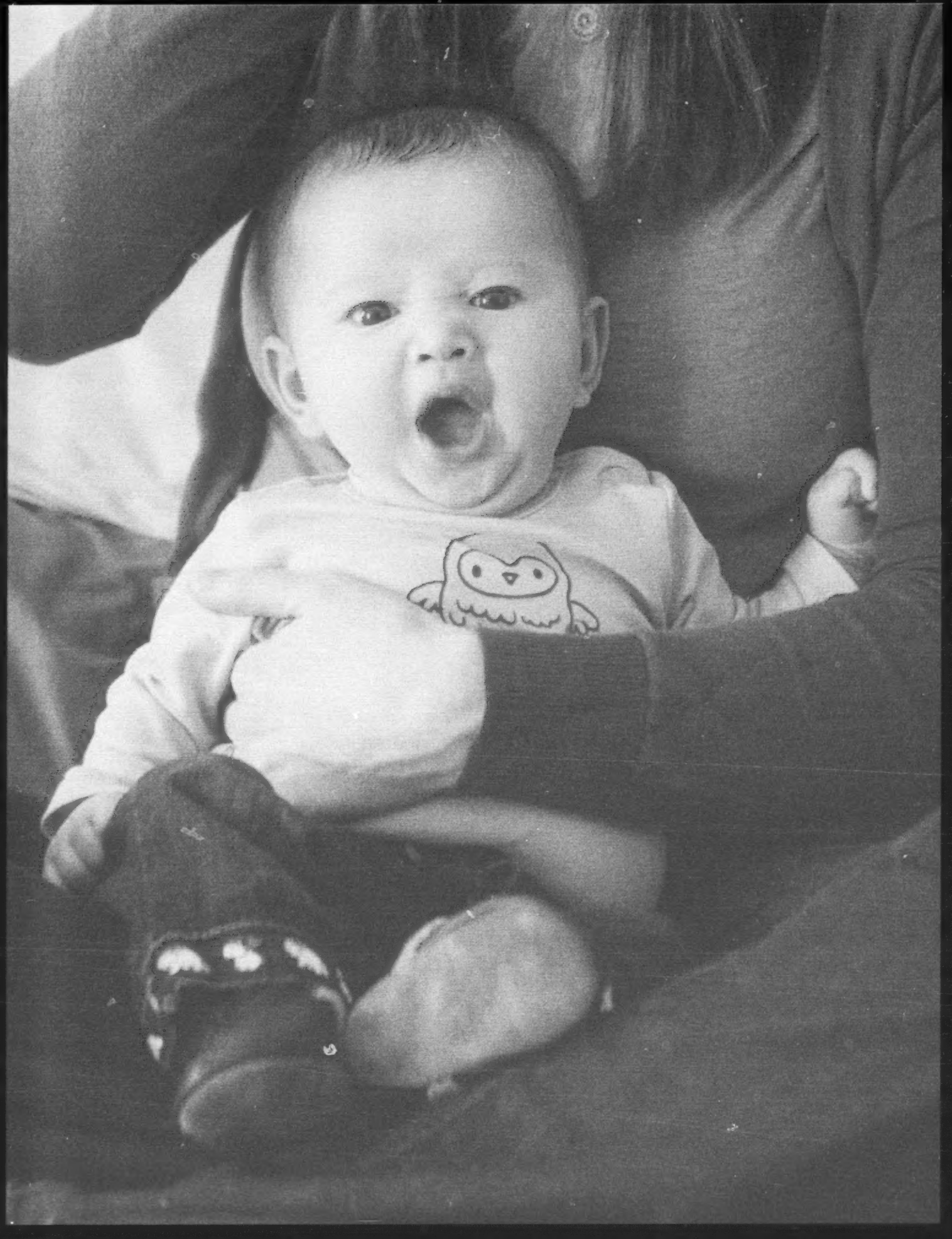
EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

ACTION PLAN

right from the start

Northwest Territories



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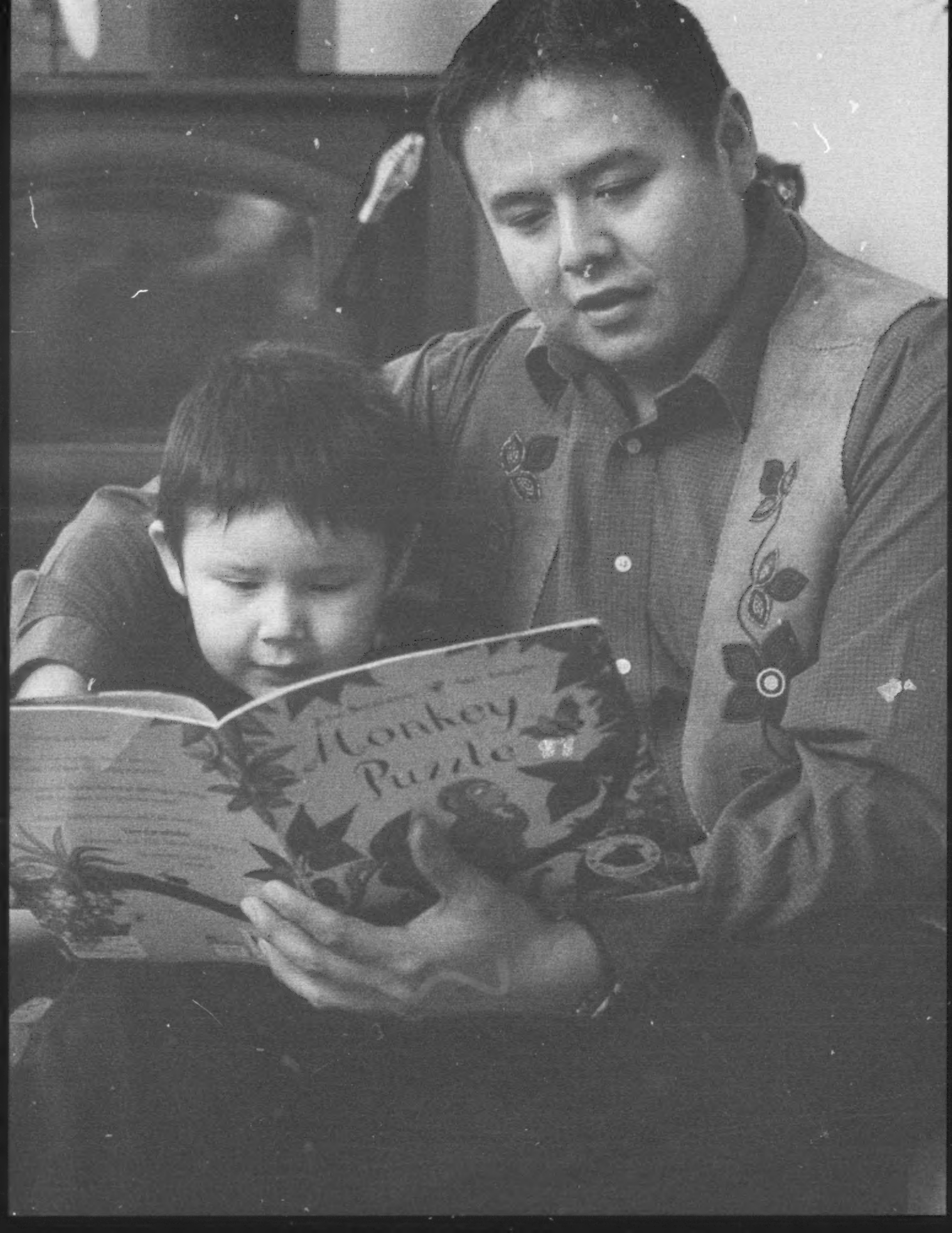
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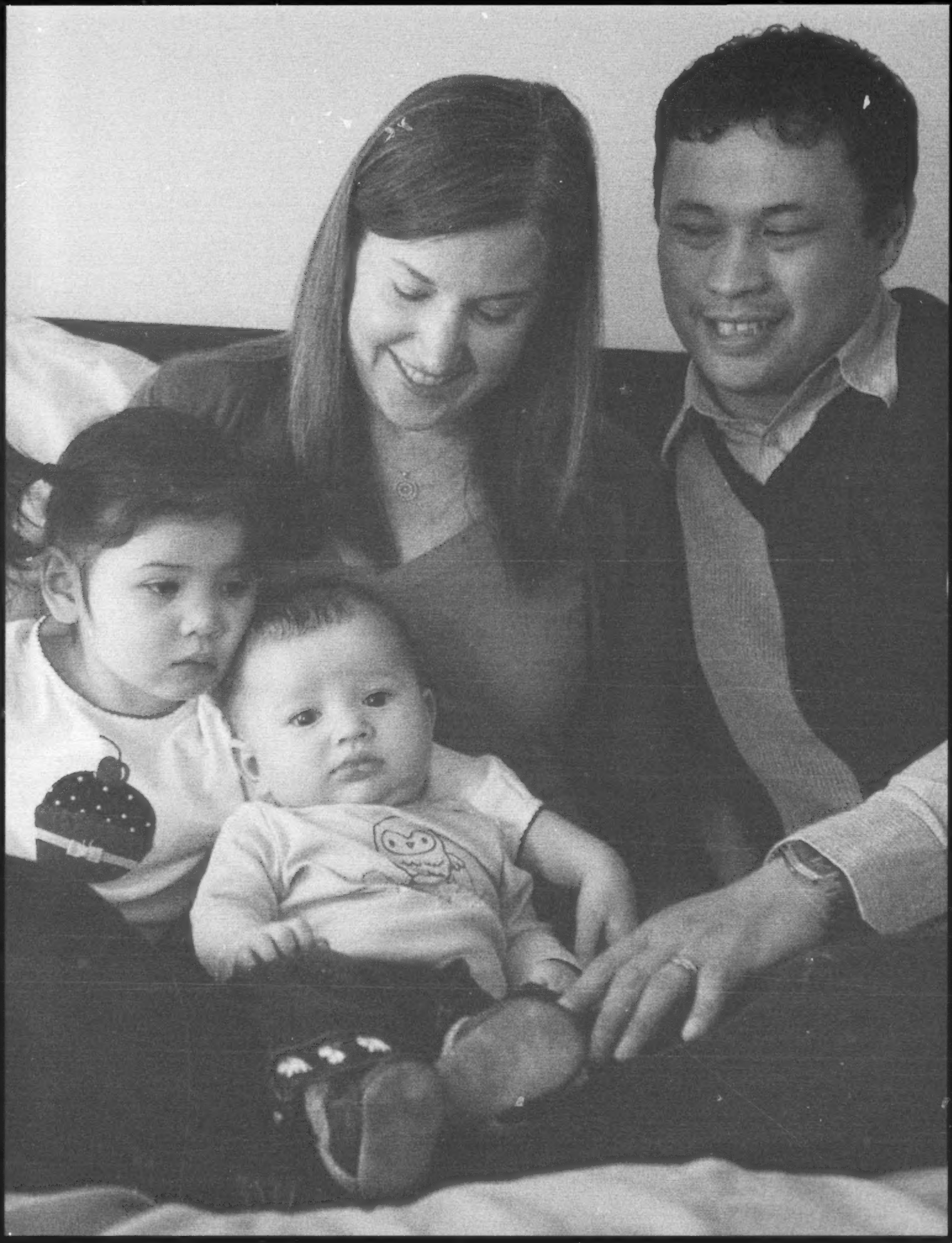


Commitment 1:
Expectant mothers will have access to evidence-based services that support improved outcomes for mom and baby

Areas for Action

1. Increase access to midwifery services and further integrate midwifery into perinatal care

Rationale

Healthy development begins with a healthy pregnancy. To support a healthy prenatal environment, expectant mothers should have access to knowledge, skills and supports. Providing birthing options closer to home decreases stress, restores community pride, improves culturally appropriate care, and increases continuity of care.

Deliverables

Deliverables:

- Midwifery services available in Hay River and the Beaufort Delta region

Targets:

2014-2015

- Revise program standards related to perinatal care and implement revised NWT *Prenatal Record* forms
- Initiate midwifery services in Hay River
- Begin consultation on Midwifery in the Beaufort-Delta region
- Develop and implement a data collection and reporting strategy for midwifery services

2015-2016

- Based on consultation, develop a plan to make Midwifery services available in the Beaufort Delta region

Accountability

HSS

Areas for Action

2. Standardize prenatal referrals for expectant mothers with addiction issues

Rationale

There are many factors that affect a healthy pregnancy and healthy development such as the mother's state of mental health during pregnancy, high-levels of nicotine exposure before birth, and the consumption of alcohol during pregnancy.

Providing timely access to services and treatment can help improve outcomes for mother and baby.

Deliverables

Deliverables:

- Standardized referral protocol ensuring that expectant mothers with mental health or addictions issues have priority access to treatment

Targets:

2014-2015

- Implement protocols to ensure priority access to addictions and mental health treatment for expectant mothers that request it
- Develop and implement an integrated case management approach for pregnant women with addictions or mental health issues
- Provide training to all primary care providers on using the new *NWT Prenatal Record* forms
- Implement a data tracking mechanism

2015-2016

- Evaluate the integrated case management approach to allow for ongoing quality improvement
- Monitor and report on the implementation of screening and priority access protocols for addictions and mental health treatment

Accountability

HSS

Areas for Action

3. Improve outreach and support for expectant mothers in the areas of nutrition, breastfeeding, referrals to community groups and resources, education around smoking, alcohol and drugs, mental health labour and delivery information

Rationale

A healthy pregnancy will strengthen the growing baby, and prevent physical and mental health problems from manifesting later in the child's life. The Healthy Pregnancy Group, operated by the Yellowknife Health and Social Services Authority, aims to improve birth experiences and outcomes of pregnant women who travel into Yellowknife from NWT communities for labour and delivery services. This group can also provide education and information on the effects of smoking, alcohol, drugs, mental health, nutrition and breastfeeding.

Evidence supports that breastfeeding is the ideal method of infant nutrition. A collaborative approach is needed to support women through education and awareness of the importance of breastfeeding in early childhood development.

Deliverables

Deliverables:

- The NWT health and social services system delivers improved programs that support healthy lifestyles in pre and post-natal periods for residents from all communities

Targets:

2014-2015

- Continue to provide support to community-based breastfeeding programs
- Research standards for breastfeeding and proper growth based on best practices, guidelines and standards
- Provide education and training related to pre/post natal healthy life style choices through community-based programs including expanding the Healthy Pregnancy Group to women who give birth in Yellowknife
- Through the expansion of the Midwifery Program, expand the model of prenatal care to include women who give birth in Hay River and the Beaufort Delta
- Identify steps and timelines for Baby Friendly Initiative accreditation to be completed for all NWT hospitals and health centres
- Develop and implement a data collection and reporting strategy to track program utilization and effectiveness

2015-2016

- Implement accreditation of hospitals and health centres that provide birthing services through the Baby Friendly Initiative
- Ongoing monitoring and reporting on data set to support future evaluations
- Monitor progress on improving outreach and support for expectant mothers

Accountability

HSS

Commitment 2:
Early intervention programming aimed at infants, children and parents will be expanded

Areas for Action

4. Build on the strengths of the Healthy Family Program in all regions in the NWT

Rationale

A nurturing parent-child relationship is key to a child's healthy development. Children's ability to manage emotions and cope with stress is nurtured through healthy relationships with parents and caregivers. A happy secure child can develop trust, self-esteem, self-control and positive relationships. Building on the Healthy Family Program in all regions of the NWT will strengthen supports available to parents and their young children.

Integrated programs and services for families can provide quality programming, attend to community-driven priorities, focus on promotion and prevention, engage and empower parents and respond to the specific development needs of children. Integrated and responsive services provide a more holistic approach that:

- Improves collaboration and communication between agencies in order to coordinate client care,
- Eliminates systemic and professional barriers,
- Provides services in convenient locations,
- Connects services by offering two services in one location; and,
- Expands the roles of existing service providers so that multiple issues can be addressed in one visit.

Deliverables

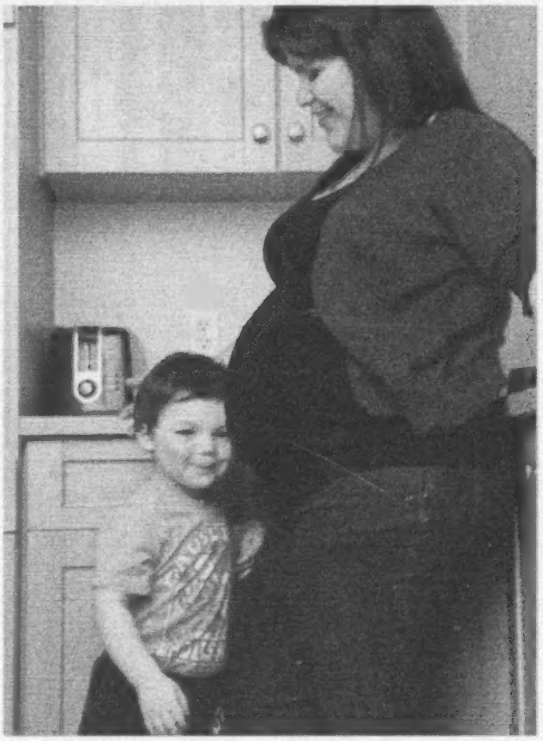
Deliverables:

- Improved access, availability and outreach for evidence-based programs aimed at improving the lives of children from 0 – 5 by promoting the importance of the role that families play in child development
- Increased integration of programs and services available to families through the expansion of the Child and Family Resource Programs and Services (CFRPS) model

Targets:

2014-2015

- Provide funding to NGOs to deliver ECD programming aimed at mothers living in transitional housing such as Betty House and Rock Hill Apartments
- Continue to fund the HSS Authorities to ensure each region is appropriately funded for training and support for the effective delivery of the Healthy Family Programs (HFP) in all regions in the NWT
- Develop and implement standards for the HFP to ensure consistency in program delivery and include information on oral health, nutrition, information on services and supports, and the risk and protective factors for child development
- Evaluate HFP implementation to ensure consistent program delivery and compliance to standards.



- Complete program evaluation for the two CFRPS in Ndilo and Tulita
- Develop plan to increase the integration of CFRPS at the community level

2015-2016

- Develop and implement a data collection and reporting strategy for HFP to support future outcome evaluation and ongoing compliance to standards
- Develop and implement options for cost effective service delivery of the HFP program to all communities in the NWT (including those with low birth rates)
- Integrate early intervention programs and services with the CFRPS model

Accountability

HSS
ECE

Areas for Action

5. Expand programs aimed at improving oral health and nutrition

Rationale

Dental decay in children is the most common chronic childhood disease. It is a health crisis among Canadian Aboriginal children. Oral health affects all dimensions of a child's wellbeing (functional, psychological and social). Oral pain effects children's sleep, growth, behavior, communication, learning and self-esteem.

Early childhood nutrition affects proper growth and development. Lack of proper nutrition in the early years can cause adverse effects on body weight/height, brain development as well as dental caries, failure to thrive/ learn, stunted growth, bone deformities, as well as chronic diseases later in life.

Deliverables

Deliverables:

- A sustainable model for oral health delivery in the NWT and strategies aimed at improving nutrition

Targets:

2014-2015

- Based on the 2013/14 review of best practices in other jurisdictions, develop a sustainable model of oral health promotion in the NWT and identify resource requirements
- Document success and share practices across programs such as the Healthy Family Collective Kitchen, Healthy Beginnings and other prenatal nutrition programs that improve prenatal nutritional intake and support
- Enhance education, support and promotion of breastfeeding
- Identify training programs for front line workers in the delivery of community-based programs related to pre/postnatal nutrition, breastfeeding and healthy nutrition for children 0 – 5 and oral health
- Develop and implement a data collection and reporting strategy for oral health and nutrition programs

2015-2016

- Implement a new model for promotion of oral health in the NWT within available resources
- Ongoing monitoring and reporting on data set to support future evaluations

Accountability

HSS

Commitment 3:
Early childhood assessment, intervention and responses will be improved

Areas for Action

6. Standardize the use and implementation of universal screening tools and assessments aimed at identifying vulnerable or at risk families and children

Rationale

Developmental screenings identify developmental issues early and provide a way to identify at risk families that may benefit from targeted support. The earlier the need for interventions and supports are identified, the more effective they will be.

Deliverables

Deliverables:

- One-time comprehensive assessment of all 5 year olds in the NWT to include: sight, hearing, speech, developmental readiness for school
- Standardized screening to monitor children's developmental milestones from 0 – 5 to improve responses to developmental needs
- Protocol for appropriate sharing of information and improved lines of intra-departmental communications, between agencies and professionals, related to screening outcomes to inform resource allocation decisions
- Results of baseline assessment and Early Development Instrument (EDI) used to inform decisions to improve ECD programs and services for 0 – 5

Targets:

2014-2015

- Complete the one-time assessment of 5 year olds: sight, hearing, speech, developmental readiness for school and evaluate the use of the standardized screening tool
- Building on the results of the one-time assessment, standardize the implementation and use of age appropriate screening tools/instruments and monitoring approaches for the routine assessment of children 0 – 5
- Develop appropriate training and communication for screening tools, as well as an implementation plan to deploy these tools NWT-wide
- Develop and implement mechanisms for electronic data capture, validation, analysis and reporting at the community, regional and territorial levels, including protocols for appropriate information sharing between Departments and communications for individual and aggregate level data
- Identify gaps where additional focus is required to address healthy development in the 0 – 3 age range

2015-2016

- Continued roll-out of NWT standardized screening tools for 0 – 5, and electronic data capture/management
- Preliminary evaluation of new screening tools and data capture/management approaches in order to fine-tune tools, procedures in light of frontline and expert feedback
- Evaluate outcomes of first year of data for NWT screening tools to inform next steps and related program and policy development

Accountability

HSS
ECE

Areas for Action

7. Ensure consistent equitable access to Occupational Therapy, Speech Therapy, Public Health and community counseling services and follow up for children identified with developmental issues

Rationale

Given the rural and remote context of the NWT, improving access and developing a sustainable community-based model for "between appointments" follow-up on recommendations and treatment plans is critical. This model will need to incorporate the role of parents, families, and community-based staff in carrying out ongoing treatment plans.

The current NWT model for early childhood screening, identification of developmental delays and intervention has known gaps. There is currently no consistent mechanism for the identification and screening of children age 2 to 3. For those children that are screened and identified as having developmental delays, the method of referral is not consistent and is often reliant on parents to seek a referral for their child. Often, parents are not adequately informed of the importance of early childhood development and appropriate interventions and do not advocate for the referral. A more direct link between screening results and referrals to early intervention services would greatly improve outcomes for vulnerable at risk children and families in small communities.

Deliverables

Deliverables:

- NWT families and children have improved access and follow-up care for Occupational Therapy, Speech Therapy, Physiotherapy and Audiology services

Targets:

2014-2015

- Complete an assessment of the service delivery model for Rehabilitation Services (Occupational Therapy, Speech Therapy, Physiotherapy and Audiology) to identify gaps in access to services and community-based follow-up on recommendations and treatment plans
- Undertake an evaluation of the effectiveness of Telespeech as the delivery model for Speech Therapy in small communities
- Develop a plan to reduce gaps and improve rehabilitation services and follow-up through a sustainable community based model
- Develop an early intervention service delivery model that includes early intervention services such as:
  - child identification for screening and assessment (0 – 5)
  - information for parents on child's growth and development
  - referral to appropriate intervention programs
  - assistance to parents and caregivers through outreach and follow-up "between appointments" to ensure consistent follow-through on recommendations and treatment plans identified by rehabilitation services
  - identification of community based child care programs and connection to community based resources
  - and liaison with school staff to facilitate a smooth transition to school

2015-2016

- Identify required resources to improve access to rehabilitation services and follow-up
- Implement early intervention services
- Develop and implement data collection, analysis and reporting mechanisms to support future program evaluations

Accountability

HSS
ECE

Commitment 4:
Coordination and integration improved across the continuum of ECD programs and services.

Areas for Action

8. Strengthen the alignment between early childhood programs and services and the needs of communities

Rationale

The Early Development Instrument (EDI) is a population-based measure of children's development at school entry. The EDI provides information to guide decision-making to strengthen programs and services. Programs, services and supports available for children and families vary between Yellowknife, regional centres and small communities.

Access to programs and services involves not just availability but also family awareness of what is offered.

Aligning HSS and ECE programs on a continuum will provide opportunities to enhance the awareness supports for children and families.

Deliverables

Deliverables:

- Continuum of early childhood programs and services better aligned with the needs of communities and easy for families to navigate:
- Annual collection, analysis, and an online Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping of the Early Development Instrument (EDI) data
- Online interactive information system of mapped programs, services and supports by community
- EDI data informs decision-making related to early childhood programs and services

Targets:

2014-2015

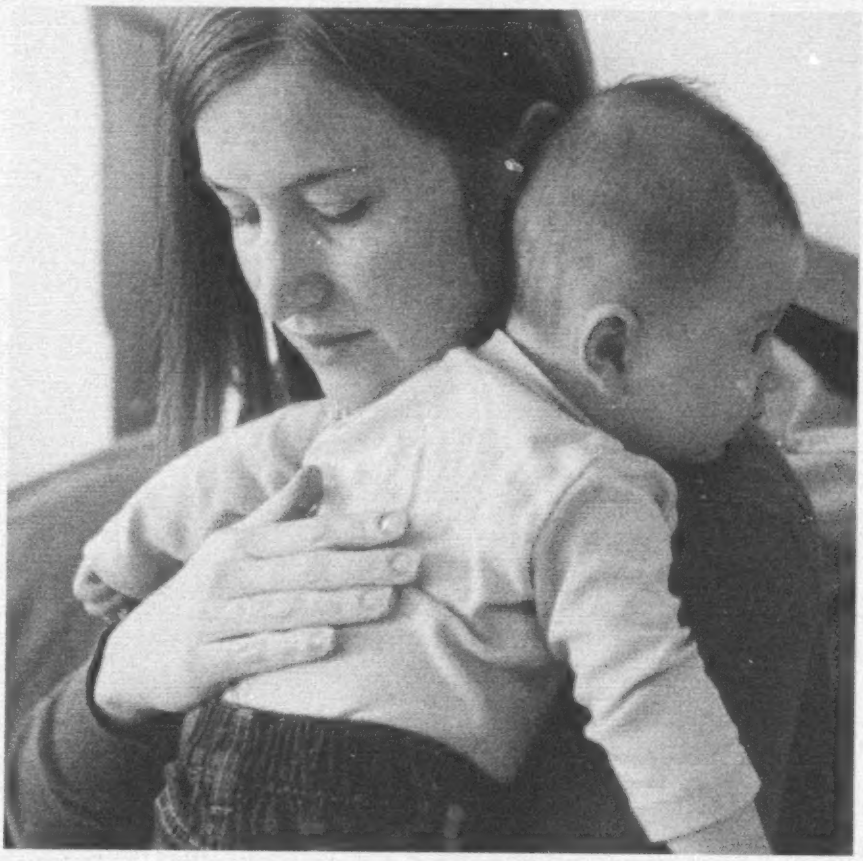
- Collect, analyze and report data using the EDI
- Create the initial GIS map of EDI data by region
- Use EDI data as a part of ECD monitoring, evaluation and accountability measures

2015-2016

- Ongoing EDI data collection for continued ECD monitoring, evaluation and accountability measures
- Report on trends in the cumulative EDI data collected

Accountability

ECE
HSS



Areas for Action

9. Support communities to improve the coordination and alignment between early childhood development programs

Rationale

Access to a wide variety of coordinated services is important for optimal child development. By strengthening coordination between programs and services and simplifying and streamlining processes we reduce the barriers that affect a family's ability to access a range of programs and services. This approach also supports the community's role in establishing priorities and effectively meeting the needs of its residents.

Deliverables

Deliverables:

- Community-driven initiatives to strengthen the alignment between early childhood programs and services

Targets:

2014-2015

- Provide support to communities to facilitate community level discussions around coordinating early childhood development programs to build on the success of existing programs
- Provide support to the interagency committees in identified communities to strengthen the sharing of resources and information across early childhood development programs
- Work with interagency committees to enhance supports for parents to assist in referrals and program navigation
- Ensure appropriate accountability of wellness plans results through contribution agreements and reporting

2015-2016

- Ongoing accountability reporting on wellness plans
- Collaborate with communities to ensure the successful implementation of early intervention services such as:
  - child identification for screening and assessment (0 – 5)
  - information for parents on child's growth and development
  - referral to appropriate intervention programs
  - assistance to parents and caregivers through outreach and follow-up "between appointments" to ensure consistent follow-through on recommendations and treatment plans identified by rehabilitation services
  - identification of community based child care programs and connection to community based resources
  - liaison with school staff to facilitate a smooth transition to school

Accountability

HSS
ECE

Areas for Action

10. Support at risk children and families using an interdisciplinary approach

Rationale

Early intervention is important in preventing developmental delays, minimizing the negative effects of social and environmental stressors and supporting children at risk. Yet social supports and early interventions in isolation do not adequately respond to the complex challenges facing many children and families across the NWT.

The integrated team approach is a proven way of reaching at risk children and families, reducing barriers to wellness, achieving better outcomes, and helping to prevent children and families from "falling through the cracks." A team approach reduces stress on children and caregivers trying to navigate disconnected systems and services.

An integrated approach involves a team that could include: local governments, elders, community-based agencies, ECE, HSS, NWTHC, Justice, and MACA to provide "wrap-around" services for children and families identified as vulnerable or at risk. Support through wrap around supports from an integrated team will help at risk children and families respond to challenges, including those related to poverty, education, employment, mental health and addictions, health status, housing, homelessness and family violence.

Deliverables

Deliverables:

- Integrated team-based "wrap-around" services that are coordinated, individualized, holistic, and geared to the strengths of children and families

Targets:

2014-2015

- Develop an implementation plan for integrated team-based "wrap around" services
- Identify potential communities to implement the "wrap-around" services plan
- Develop key messages that focus on the basics of healthy child development, to inform all communications campaigns

2015-2016

- Develop and support initiation of "wrap around" integrated services teams in identified NWT communities
- Build capacity at the community level
- Expand the integrated team approach to more communities
- Continue to build capacity across the NWT

Accountability

ECE
HSS

Commitment 5:
Promotion, awareness and education initiatives related to early childhood development available to all families and communities

Areas for Action

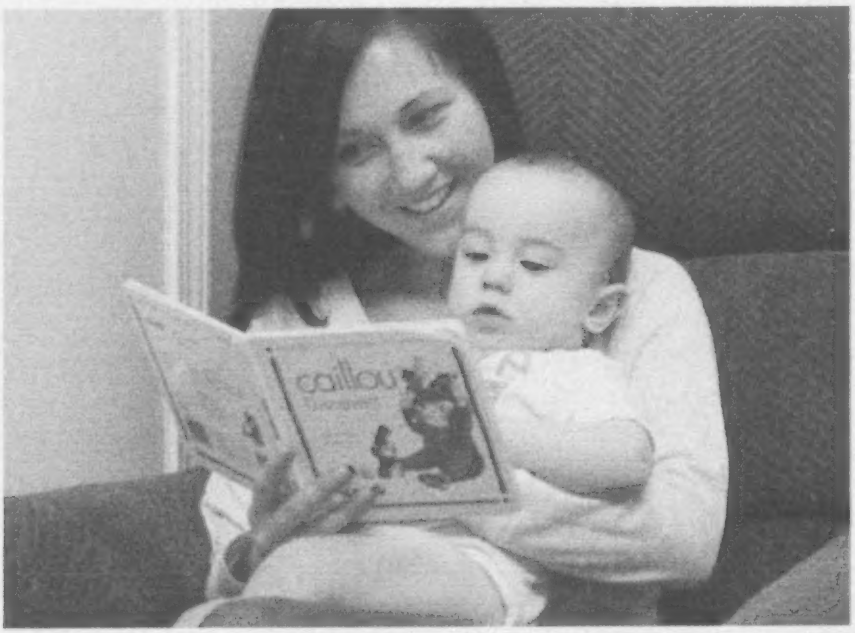
11. Target campaigns to raise awareness about the importance of early childhood development, the impact of the early years, the role of parents and those who work with children

Rationale

Consistent campaigns to all identified audiences will help realize the vision of the *Early Childhood Development Framework* by making the NWT "a place where children are born healthy and raised in safe and respectful families and communities."

In order to target those most vulnerable, it is critical to incorporate the importance of early childhood development into ongoing foster parent training.

The Parenting Resource for Information, Development and Education (PRIDE) program is designed to strengthen the quality of family foster care and adoption services. This is accomplished by providing a standardized, consistent, structured framework for the competency-based recruitment, preparation, and selection of foster parents and adoptive parents, and for foster parent in-service training and ongoing professional development.



Deliverables

Deliverables:

- Parents, families, and caregivers are informed on the importance of early childhood development

Targets:

2014-2015

- Continue awareness campaigns targeted to parents, families, and caregivers on the role of parents and caregivers and the importance of early years (0 – 3)
- Aligning Healthy Choices pillars with *Right from the Start* wider initiative – creating micro campaigns, i.e. healthy pregnancy, interaction, nutrition, mental health, etc.
- Cross promotion with Healthy Choices – leveraging *Right From The Start* with Healthy Choices Framework
- Continue to provide ECD education, promotion and awareness training as part of ongoing NWT Foster Parent training (PRIDE)

2015-2016

- Develop a mechanism to measure the reach and relevance of existing social marketing campaigns

Accountability

HSS
ECE

Areas for Action

12. Use innovative mediums and technology to reach people with culturally relevant promotion and prevention tools, updates on available programming for parents and children, and health and education messages

Rationale

Supporting all NWT parents and caregivers with information, tools, and options for programs and services to support their children's healthy development is a priority.

Providing increased access to information and resources will enhance stay-at home parents' options for supports.

Access to appropriate and relevant resources through modern technology will provide mothers and fathers additional options to support their child's healthy development.

Deliverables

Deliverables:

- Provision of a range of information sources that may include items ranging from baby bags and /or resource filled electronic tablets

Targets:

2014-2015

- Develop a prototype for baby bags and identify resources for electronic tablets to be shared with new parents in their home communities.
  - Develop a teaching resource guide with input from the Healthy Family Program and early childhood experts for inclusion in the baby bags for parents
  - Develop resources for electronic tablets that will help mothers track developmental milestones, provide immunization information and highlight the importance of early childhood development
- Develop the *Right from the Start* website to provide parents with a variety of resources to choose from including:
  - Online toolkits for parents
  - Apps for downloading related to parenting and child development
- Provide specific apps like immunizations that would provide information, serve as a reminder and maintain a permanent record of the child's immunization
- Social media-based support network – through the existing NWT *Right from the Start* Facebook page, and other existing GNWT social marketing campaigns (i.e., Moms, Boobs & Babies; Choose NWT.ca; etc.)
- Report on web analytics from the *Right from the Start* Facebook page, website and other technological mediums

2015-2016

- Distribution of the baby bags and electronic tablets to new parents in their home communities
- Develop and implement a satisfaction questionnaire for new parents to assess their satisfaction of the baby bags
- Build and further develop *Right From the Start* website to include current and expanded family based resources
- Grow the reach of the *Right From the Start* Facebook page

Accountability

ECE
HSS

Areas for Action

13. Strengthen preventative approaches to children's health and well-being and build understandings of healthy child development in children and youth

Rationale

The roots of health and well-being are in the early years. Daily practices related to oral health, nutrition, and physical activity help build habits that last a lifetime.

Senior secondary students are the NWT parents of the future. Building their understandings about their own health and well-being and of child development in general is a proactive approach to impacting future generations.

Deliverables

Deliverables:

- Strengthened oral health, nutrition, physical activity components across NWT early childhood development programs
- Senior Secondary early childhood development course that has dual credit value and builds knowledge of child development in future parents

Targets:

2014-2015

- Support early childhood development programs in the areas of child health and well-being that include:
  - Nutrition, oral health, staying active, oral language and healthy relationships
  - Domains of child development: social, emotional, physical, cognitive, and language
- Develop a dual credit Senior Secondary early childhood development course

2015-2016

- Review and ongoing support of early childhood development programs
- Pilot dual credit Senior Secondary early childhood development course

Accountability

ECE
HSS

Commitment 6:
Access to high quality, affordable early learning programs and child care services are enhanced

Areas for Action

14. Address the infrastructure challenges of finding safe and appropriate locations for early childhood development programs and child care services as identified by each community

Rationale

A foundational step to increase access to high quality early childhood education and care programs in all NWT communities is to find safe and appropriate sites for program delivery.

Overcoming the barriers related to ensuring all families have access to an early childhood program will require partnerships with stakeholders and policies to allow for innovative approaches to addressing issues of space.

GNWT owned buildings such as schools provide one possibility that ECE will explore for expansion of programs.

Deliverables

Deliverables:

- Develop a policy to guide partnerships, capital projects and public investment in early childhood development
- Ensure infrastructure is adequate for Junior Kindergarten in schools

Targets:

2014-2015

- Identify and develop policy to guide partnerships, capital projects and public investment in early childhood development programs
- Address identified infrastructure challenges in schools to facilitate adding Junior Kindergarten

2015-2016

- Ongoing monitoring of partnerships, capital projects, and public investments in early childhood development programs
- Ongoing monitoring of infrastructure during continued expansion of Junior Kindergarten

Accountability

ECE

Areas for Action

15. Restructure administration and finance processes for all early childhood development programs to promote equity, inclusion, quality and program stability

Rationale

Early childhood development programs that promote equity must be accessible and affordable to all families. The administrative requirements attached to the funding are time consuming for program managers.

There is a need for a renewed approach to funding early childhood development programs. By cutting the red tape and simplifying the financial processes, programs will be less weighed down by administrative expectations.

Deliverables

Deliverables:

- Cohesive and aligned governance and administrative processes for ECE's Early Childhood Program (ECP)
- Simplified and clear funding processes for ECP

Targets:

2014-2015

- Review how other jurisdictions provide funding to early childhood development programs
- Conduct a review of the ECP administrative and funding processes
- Realign the internal ECP governance structures and administrative systems

2015-2016

- Develop and implement revised ECP funding processes and related criteria to support inclusion, quality and equity of access within early childhood development programs

Accountability

ECE

Areas for Action

16. Provide access to high quality early education programs

Rationale

In the NWT, baseline data from the Early Development Instrument (EDI) suggests that over 32% of children are vulnerable, meaning they are behind in their development at 5 years old. Vulnerabilities in development, according to the NWT baseline EDI findings, are significantly higher in smaller communities where access and quality varies widely.

The research consistently shows that high quality education programs for 4 year olds positively impact children's development. High quality early childhood development programs affect everything from graduation rates to health and well-being outcomes. The research shows that high quality preschool programs make the most difference for vulnerable children.

Many NWT families, most especially those in small communities, do not have adequate access to early childhood programs.

Deliverables

Deliverables:

- Junior Kindergarten (JK) for 4 year olds phased in beginning with small community schools

Targets:

2014-2015

- Complete program evaluation of 2013/14 Junior Kindergarten demonstration sites
- Complete plan to address infrastructure challenges for transitioning of Junior Kindergarten into school system that considers the needs of all stakeholders including families and existing early childhood program providers
- Initiate the process to amend the Education Act to include 4 year olds
- Implement Phase 1 of Junior Kindergarten in 29 small communities
- Provide transition support to Education Authorities and early childhood programs who have had to adapt to changes
- Pilot the NWT play-based kindergarten curriculum in classrooms with junior and senior kindergarten children together
- Provide training and program support for all Junior Kindergarten sites
- Evaluation of Phase 1 Junior Kindergarten implementation
- Develop communication package for families and communities

2015-2016

- Implement Phase 2 of Junior Kindergarten in regional centres
- Provide transition support to Education Authorities and early childhood programs who have had to adapt to changes
- Evaluation of Phase 2 Junior Kindergarten implementation
- Ongoing training with a focus on high quality programming
- Prepare for Phase 3 Junior Kindergarten implementation (Yellowknife) for 2016-2017

Accountability

ECE

Areas for Action

17. Support culture-based programs that foster Aboriginal language development in children and involving Elders in programs

Rationale

Promoting children's Aboriginal language development in the early years is a priority in the NWT Aboriginal Languages Plan. The early years provide an important window for learning language and a child's connection to their Aboriginal culture and language contribute significantly to their healthy development.

Language Nests are an early childhood immersion approach to Aboriginal language revitalization that originated in New Zealand and has had considerable success in revitalizing the Maori language. Immersion programs work by tapping in to the way brains develop and people learn new languages. Language is not directly taught; instead, the child is fully immersed and surrounded by the language in real, natural and every day ways.

Funding to support Language Nest programs has been available to licensed child care facilities since 2003. The number of Language Nests varies each year, but has hovered around 20 for the last few years. Although good work has been done in the Language Nest programs, many challenges limit the programs ability to meet the intended goal of young children fluently speaking in their Aboriginal language. Reviewing the Language Nest programs and building on the strengths of communities are required to strengthen the program.

Deliverables

Deliverables:

- Restructured Aboriginal Language Nest programs to better align with the needs of communities
- Link developed between the Elders in Schools program and early childhood programs offered in schools

Targets:

2014-2015

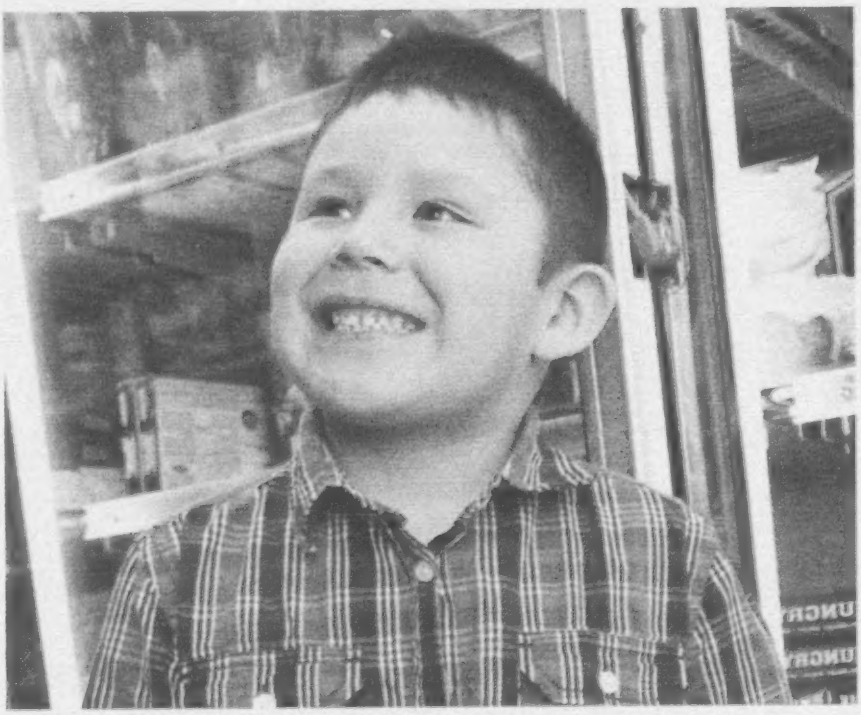
- Conduct a scan of all NWT Language Nest programs
- Conduct a scan of Language Nest programs and related early childhood Aboriginal language acquisition programs used across Canada and internationally
- Restructure the Aboriginal Language Nest programming and funding to better align with the needs of communities and the goal of supporting Aboriginal language development in young children
- Identify opportunities to strengthen connections between early childhood programs in the schools and the Elders in Schools initiative

2015-2016

- Implement the restructured Language Nests program funding model
- Strengthen connections between early childhood programs and the Elders in Schools initiative in Aboriginal Language Nest programs
- Collect data on children's language development in Aboriginal Language Nest programs

Accountability

ECE



Areas for Action
18. Develop cultural competencies of early childhood professionals.

Rationale

Culturally competent practitioners engage in ways that are respectful and responsive to the diverse needs of children, families and communities.

Research proves the strong connection between the cultural understandings and competence of practitioners with the effectiveness of programs and services.

The goal of "cultural competency" is to create a service environment that is culturally appropriate for the communities and people of those being served.

Deliverables

Deliverables:

- Cultural competence training available to early childhood professionals working with children and families

Targets:

2014-2015

- NWT cultural competence training to be included as part of the early childhood development course available to staff working in early childhood programs
- Cultural competence materials and information developed
- Cultural competence materials disseminated
- Training and support options for culture competence training provided

2015-2016

- Ongoing training and support
- Program evaluation

Accountability

ECE

Areas for Action
19. Enhance program resources for early childhood development programs

Rationale

The Organization for Economic and Co-operative Development (OECD) is an internationally recognized body focused on raising quality in early childhood education and care. In a 2011 review of early childhood programs in 18 countries, including Canada, the OECD recommended a systematic approach to raise quality in early childhood programs. Specifically, five evidenced-based policy priority areas were identified as critical: (1) setting out quality goals and regulations; (2) designing and implementing curriculum and standards; (3) improving qualifications, training and working conditions; (4) engaging families and communities; and (5) advancing data collection, research and monitoring.

Deliverables

Deliverables:

- An early learning curriculum framework for early childhood programs
- Program resources to support high quality early learning and care in ECD programs

Targets:

2014-2015

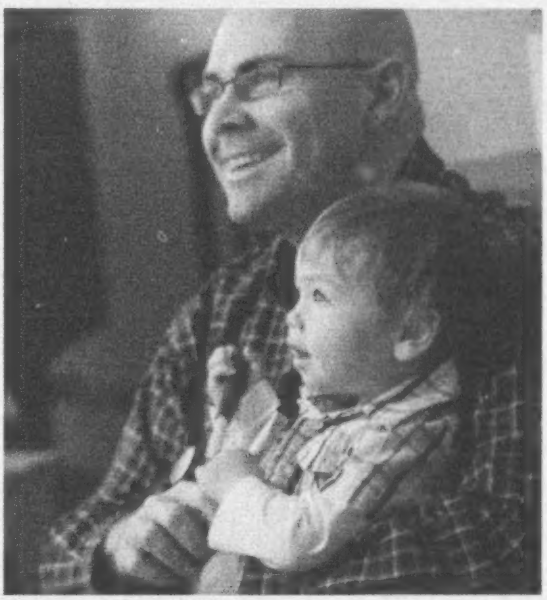
- Develop and implement an early learning framework to provide an overarching guide to all early childhood programs, including Junior Kindergarten
- Provide training and readiness planning for early learning framework implementation in licensed child care centres
- Provide optional training for family day home providers to learn about the early learning framework as it applies to their early childhood programs

2015-2016

- Data collection over time of children's developmental outcomes to measure and monitor impacts of learning framework implementation
- Provide ongoing training and support for early learning framework implementation in licensed child care centres

Accountability

ECE



Areas for Action

20. Improve the quality of licensed early childhood education and care programs

Rationale

Raising quality in early childhood development programs requires a focused effort on growth and improvement over time. Continuous feedback and support, opportunities for reflection, and identifying next steps learning from examples of evidence-based best practices all contribute to greater quality in early childhood programs.

Guiding documents and support tools give programs valuable information about evidence-based best practice, while still allowing for the flexibility for diversity in cultures, contexts and program structures.

Deliverables

Deliverables:

- Development of training and tools to improve the quality of early childhood development programs in the NWT
- Strengthened program quality via Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS) and Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale (ITERS)
- An NWT ECD demonstration site: a proposed teaching and learning "ideal model" centre for early childhood development educators

Targets:

2014-2015

- Develop a plan to build on the use of ECERS and ITERS in the NWT to focus on continuous quality improvement of programs
- Develop an "ideal model" centre demonstration sites

2015-2016

- Provide ongoing support for quality improvement in early childhood development programs
- Provide ongoing support for the proposed demonstration site

Accountability

ECE

Areas for Action

21. Increase the number of qualified early childhood development professionals in licensed programs

Rationale

High quality early childhood programs require well-trained and knowledgeable educators. Capacity in the early childhood development workforce varies widely.

Some early childhood development staff have a one-year ECD certificate, with many having no post-secondary education whatsoever.

Another capacity related issue is the problem of low income earning potential in the ECD field, even for those who do complete certificate and diploma programs. ECD staff want the importance of their profession recognized, valued and reflected in their income earning potential.

Deliverables

Deliverables:

- Promotion of the ECD profession
- Credentialing system for ECD professionals
- Tiered wage top-ups for ECD professionals
- Scholarship fund as an incentive and support for Northerners to complete ECD diploma and degree programs
- Incentive and support system to encourage students of the Aurora College ECD certificate program to complete
- Strengthen the certificate program available through Aurora College
- Provide Aurora College ECD certificate students with incentives, supports and mentoring to complete the program
- Develop and implement an NWT wage top-up plan
- Review the credentialing practices in other Canadian jurisdictions
- Provide access to an online introductory early childhood development course that will be recognized for wage top-up purposes
- Amend the *NWT Child Daycare Act and Regulation Standards*, as necessary
- Develop and implement a plan for scholarships to incent and support Northerners to complete ECD diploma and degree programs

Targets:

2014-2015

- Support all existing early childhood staff to have the required minimum post-secondary education and ongoing annual professional development, as specified in the *NWT Child Daycare Standards Regulations*

2015-2016

- Provide ongoing support to early childhood staff to obtain continuing post-secondary education and ongoing professional development
- Provide ongoing support to Aurora College ECD programs
- Develop an NWT credentialing system for ECD staff
- Deliver a public awareness campaign to promote the profession of early childhood development
- Collect data and measure impacts of actions to support the early childhood educator profession on programs in the NWT

Accountability

ECE

Commitment 7:
Monitoring, reporting and ongoing evaluation for continuous quality improvement in early childhood development programs and services.

Areas for Action

22. Develop and implement a Monitoring, Evaluation and Accountability (MEA) Plan for the renewed Early Childhood Development (ECD) Framework and Action Plan

Rationale

Clear roles and responsibilities, and built-in performance monitoring indicators and evaluation measures provide timely feedback and allow for adjustments along the way, ultimately increasing the quality of the program. The result will be continuous quality improvement of programs, services and initiatives available to children and families.

Deliverables

Deliverables:

- Monitoring, Evaluation and Accountability (MEA) Plan for *Early Childhood Development Framework* commitments

Targets:

2014-2015

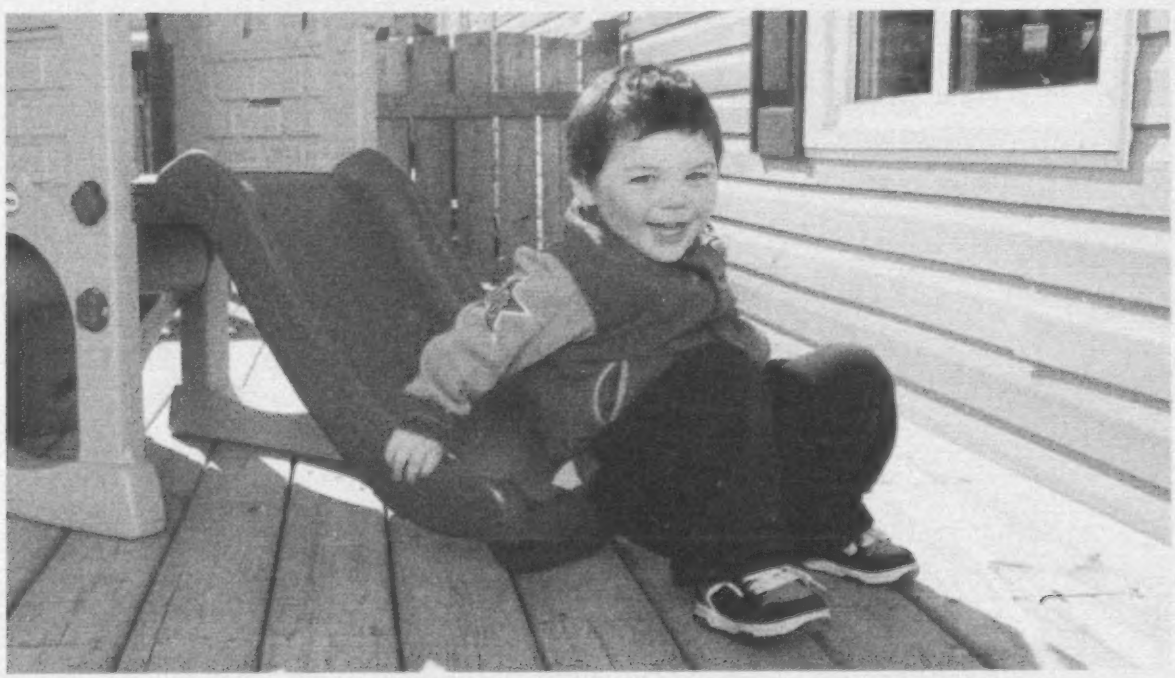
- Complete and implement the MEA Plan
- Report on progress of 2013-14 activities
- Carry out specific program evaluations, as determined by the schedule
- Building on the work from the MEA Plan, data sources and other resources to support evaluations need to be identified

2015-2016

- Develop and implement a mechanism for continuous quality improvement
- Report on progress of 2014-15 activities
- Carry out specific program evaluations, as determined by the schedule
- Implement and report on the implementation evaluation on the ECD action plan

Accountability

HSS
ECE



right from the start

Northwest Territories

If you would like this information in another official language, call us.

English

Si vous voulez ces informations en français, contactez-nous.

French

Kīspin ki nitawihtīn ē nīhīyawihk ōma ācimōwin, tipwāsinān.

Cree

TŁĮCHǪ YATI K'ÈÈ. DI WEGODI NEWǪ DÈ, GOTS'O GONEDE.

Tłı̨chǫ

ʔERIHTŁ'ÍS DËNE SÚŁINÉ YATI T'A HUTS'ELKËR
XA BEYÁYATI THEʔĄ ʔAT'E, NUWE TS'ËN YÓŁTI.

Chipewyan

EDI GONDI DEHGÁH GOTʼĮE ZHATĮE K'ÉÉ EDATŁ'ÉH
ENAHDDHĘ NIDE NAXETS'Ę EDAHLÍ

South Slavey

K'ÁHSHÓ GOTʼĮNE XƏDǾ K'É HEDERI
ʔEDĮHTL'É YERINIWĘ NÍDÉ DÚLE.

North Slavey

Jii gwandak izhii ginjìk vatʼatrʼijąhch'uu zhit
yinohthan jì', diits'àt ginohkhìi.

Gwich'in

UVANITTUAQ ILITCHURISUKUPKU INUVIALUKTUN, QUQUAQLUTA.

Inuvialuktun

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Inuktitut

Hapkua titiqqat pijumagupkit Inuinnaqtun, uvaptinnut hivajarlutit.

Inuinnaqtun

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Northwest Territories

DEPARTMENTS OF EDUCATION, CULTURE AND EMPLOYMENT AND HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES